

Buy-Phone Blankets L.A.

Anyone who's ever lived in west Los Angeles knows how much energy—both human and automotive—can be expended simply getting from one point to another. But now there's Buy-Phone, a videotex service with all manner of listings: restaurant guides, movie schedules, even descriptions and prices of products being sold along Beverly Hills' ritzy Rodeo Drive. Best of all, Buy-Phone doesn't charge its customers for connect time, and there are no unwieldy passwords to worry about. All you need is a microcomputer, a modem, and a telephone; Buy-Phone's on-line advertisers pay the freight.

Buy-Phone's 11,000 listings can be called up by neighborhood. For example, if you live in Marina del Rey and want to see an 8 p.m.



showing of *Return of the Jedi*, you simply type in a series of short codes to indicate city and movie and the computer displays the name of the nearest theater that's showing the film. If that particular theater is inconvenient, the computer goes on to give you the names of theaters that are progressively more distant from your home.

"When the UCLA kids and the movie-premiere throngs all converge on Westwood, it can be very frustrating trying to get box-office information by phone," says David Lappen, Buy-Phone's vice-president. "Using the computer, you can get the information you want instantly, saving you the irritation of 19 calls that net only busy signals."

Among Buy-Phone's many listings are 1600 pertaining to restaurants, which are indexed by such categories as nationality, price, and type of entertainment. "This way the casual browser knows that dinner at, say, Chasen's is going to have a certain ambience not found at a steak house," chuckles Lappen. And if La Scala restaurant appears to be out of your price range, you can access the Buy-Phone category for food to go.

Currently there are no plans to expand Buy-Phone's services beyond the west Los Angeles area, but if you're a computer owner living in the area bordered by Mulholland Drive, Western Avenue, LAX airport, and the Pacific Ocean, Buy-Phone is only a call away at 474-0270. For more information about Buy-Phone's offerings, write the company at POB 29307, Los Angeles, CA 90029 or call (213) 279-1074. □